

## ETHIOPIA PROJECT GRANTED \$5.3 MILLION

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief has received a \$5.3 million grant from the Canadian International Development Agency for a "Food for Development" project in Ethiopia that will distribute 6750 tonnes of wheat and 260 tonnes of canola oil over 3 years. Recipients will work on community-based development projects aimed at improving long-term food security, including planting trees and constructing soil-conserving terraces.

## DELISTING IS INCONSISTENT, NLMA PRESIDENT SAYS

Effective May 1, Newfoundland's health-insurance plan has stopped paying for the driver's medical checkup required for drivers older than 70, circumcision for newborns, hypnotherapy and excision of xanthelasma. The services represented \$200 000 in annual billings, which the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) *Communiqué* says will now be removed from the global budget.

In a news release, NLMA president Dr. Ed Hunt said that even though deinsurance is a reality in all provinces, there still is no consistent approach to determine which services will not be covered and how far deinsurance initiatives might go. "It is important to develop a national list of core and comprehensive services

so that what is deemed medically necessary in Newfoundland and covered under medicare is the same as what is covered in British Columbia," Hunt said. "If not, you will have a patchwork medicare system in Canada." Hunt noted that the CMA has developed a decision-making framework to evaluate core and comprehensive services, but said physicians cannot provide governments with their expertise if they are not consulted about what services are being considered for delisting.

## "WE'RE DOCTORS TOO," CHIROPRACTORS CLAIM IN \$450 000 ADVERTISING BLITZ

Canada's chiropractors are spending \$450 000 in an attempt to convince Canadians who are sceptical about their training that "chiropractors are doctors." The Canadian Chiropractic Association's (CCA) four-page advertisements began appearing in magazines such as *Maclean's* in May. In an obvious attempt to overcome possible scepticism, they stress that chiropractors are involved in university and postgraduate training for at least 7 years before opening an office. "Chiropractors are doctors," says the ad. "Officially their title is doctor of chiropractic . . . [but] we'll refer to them simply as chiropractors."

The *Globe and Mail* says the ads appear to be part of a counteroffensive against statements by some physicians. Last year, a group of leading pediatricians appealed to provincial

governments to stop funding chiropractic treatment for infants and children, since there is no evidence to support claims that chiropractors can treat many childhood illnesses (see Lowry F: "Scientific" chiropractors hope to improve status of chiropractic within scientific community. *Can Med Assoc J* 1995; 152: 402-404). Richard Giguère, president of the CCA, told the *Globe* the ads are the key part of an attempt to change "perceptions about the chiropractic profession."

## MEDICINE NEEDS CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN'S ILLNESSES

More research is needed to give the medical profession a clearer understanding of the causes and courses of women's illnesses, says Dr. Donna Stewart, who holds the University of Toronto Lillian Love Chair in Women's Health at the Toronto Hospital. Delivering the first annual Sheila Cohen Lecture at North York General Hospital — it is in memory of the hospital's first woman obstetrician-gynecologist, who died suddenly last fall at age 51 — Stewart said current understanding of women's health and illness is inadequate.

While men tend to become acutely ill and die quickly, women are more likely to contract chronic conditions and deteriorate more slowly. "If we are to sustain and enhance women's health more effectively," she said, "we will have to

have a clearer understanding of those reasons through more focused research into women's biology, the way women think and feel, and the circumstances under which they live their lives."

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## TRAFFIC FATALITIES HIT 39-YEAR LOW

The Canadian Safety Council (CSC) estimates traffic fatalities in 1994 totalled 3021, marking a 39-year low. This represents a decrease of 16% over the average number of traffic fatalities during the last 3 years, the CSC said in its quarterly publication *Safety Canada*. It says the steady improvement is due to factors such as driver-education programs, public awareness, increased seat-belt use and improved safety features.

Canada has almost 18.8 million licensed drivers and 17.8 million registered vehicles. With the average driver travelling 20 000 km each year, the fatality rate represents one death per 124 million km travelled. The CSC noted that alcohol is implicated in 40% of all driver fatalities and called for tougher action against drivers who break the law by driving while impaired.

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## PHYSICIANS ASKED TO PAY FOR SAMPLE DISPOSAL

The Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association (SPA) has asked the province's physicians to share the cost of disposing of unwanted, unused or expired drug samples. In the past, pharmacies collected unwanted drugs from physicians and the public, and the SPA arranged for them to be suitably repackaged and shipped to Ontario for incineration. Between 30% and 40% of returned products were physician samples, the SPA said.

However, costs have escalated to the point that the SPA can no longer provide this service free to third parties. In a letter published in the April newsletter of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the SPA said only products that have been separated from their original packaging will be accepted. Physicians must also agree to cover the cost of shipping and handling; a flat fee of \$50 for each 5 kg or less was proposed. Alternate disposal options are being considered, the SPA said, but there will still be a cost to physicians.

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## LETTERS SUPPORT HUMAN-RIGHTS ACTION

Amnesty International wants more physicians to participate in its medical letter-writing network and to use their influence and special skills in dealing with human-rights concerns everywhere. The organization seeks the release of "prisoners of conscience," advocates fair and early trials for political prisoners and opposes torture and the death penalty. Information is available from Amnesty International, 214 Montreal Rd., Vanier ON K1L 1A4.

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## PEDIATRICIANS SAY GOODBYE TO FEE-FOR-SERVICE

More than 100 full- and part-time pediatricians at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa and the University of Ottawa have agreed to be paid through a global budget rather than fee-for-service payments. Specialist and subspecialist physicians who teach will receive their income from an estimated \$7.7-million funding envelope; the 6-year agreement is retroactive to Apr. 1, 1995.

## NEW EDITORIAL TEAM FOR MEDICAL JOURNAL

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) has appointed two family physicians, one anglophone and one francophone, to share the job of editing its monthly clinical journal, *Canadian Family Physician*. CFPC scientific editor Dr. Anthony Reid of Orillia, Ont., will share the editing responsibility with newly appointed associate scientific editor Dr. Charles Leduc of Sherbrooke, Que.

In a news release, Reid said "there is a need to connect the magazine more closely to readers in both English-speaking and French-speaking Canada in order to enhance the quality of care that family doctors provide to their patients across this diverse country." Leduc added that the journal, which is in its 41st year of publication, will strengthen its content with articles that meet physicians' need for continuing medical education based on solid scientific evidence, and clinical practice guidelines.

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## COMPULSORY ANNUAL DUES PUT MMA IN THE BLACK

The re-establishment of compulsory payment of annual dues for nonmembers boosted dues income by \$86 777 and helped put the Manitoba Medical Association (MMA) in the black last year. The association's annual report noted that the number of nonmembers who paid MMA dues as a consequence of the MMA Dues Act increased to 514 from 138 "affiliates." Meanwhile, dual membership in the MMA and CMA increased by 48 full-time members and 35 part-time practitioners in 1994. The association ended the year with a net income of almost \$100 000 instead of a projected deficit of \$175 000.